

Humanities Seminar: Relationality & Kinship

K'é - As It Makes Me

Diné Institute for Navajo Nation Educators (DINÉ)

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Author's Note:

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Introduction

This is my second unit for the Diné Institute for Navajo Educators. The first unit is titled “Water is Life” which I wrote for my fifth-grade students. In this unit it covers the cultural perspective of water as hózhó, geography; which covers the four rivers that surround the Navajo Nations, and the surrounding communities that have water in their name, and the U.S. and Navajo Nation Government made laws to protect drinking water for the people, and I have brought in presenters from Navajo Nation Housing Authority which provide water for the people on the Navajo Nation, and a nonprofit organization call Tó Nizhóní Ání. The students really enjoyed the unit especially the end of the unit water activities. I saw how much their learning of water and self-worth have grown and how they demonstrated it in their daily lives.

I have applied to attend the institution again, but I had some health issues that I had to deal with. I told myself when I beat breast cancer I will continue to learn and to improve myself as an educator. I believe my students have healed me with their caring words and encouraged me to be strong. One of the classes wrote a letter to me telling me they need me here to enrich them with their traditional knowledge. I enrolled again with the DINÉ. I'm looking forward to teaching this unit to my students.

Context and Rationale

Classroom Demographic

Rising Thunderbird Academy is one of the three departments at Tuba City Boarding School in Tuba City, Arizona. Tuba City is an unincorporated town in the western part of the Navajo Nation, Arizona. In the 2010 census count, its population was 8,611 (City-data Tuba City, Arizona). The establishment of Tuba City Boarding School has quite a unique history. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) established the school in 1898 to educate the Native American students in Northern Arizona. Its first location was 25 miles southwest of Tuba City and was known as Blue Canyon School. It was later moved to Moenave, AZ. in 1901, the school was relocated to its current location in Tuba City, AZ. “From its beginning up until the 1940s, the school was operated by the Department of the Army. Then in the 1950s the school came under the direction of the Department of the Interior” (TCBS, 2024). There are three public schools and the boarding school that are providing education to the students within the about 50 miles radius of Tuba City. Many of the students are bussed-in each day from the surrounding communities such as Moenkopi, Cowsprings, Tonalea, Kykotsmovi, Hoenville-Bacavi, Coalmine area, Bitter Springs, Cedar Ridge, Kaibeto, Gap, Hidden Springs, White Mesa, Gray Mountain, Cameron, and the Tuba City community.

Tuba City Boarding School consists of 55 general education classrooms, 8 special education classrooms, 2 Gifted and Talented classrooms and 4 Native American education classrooms. The student population is ‘approximately 1200 and includes pre-kindergarten through eighth grade

students' (TCBS, 2024). TCBS serves the Navajo, Hopi and Paiute students. There are roughly 93% Navajo students, 5% Hopi students, 2% other tribes and ethnicity of students at Tuba City Boarding School. TCBS also provides dormitories for our students and about 10% of the students take advantage of this service, mostly those students who live in the most remote area and where the school buses have little or no access. There are three departments: Little Thunderbird Academy (grade pre-K through 2nd), Rising Thunderbird Academy (grades 3rd through 5th) and the Thunderbird Academy (grades 6th through 8th). There is one Navajo Language and Culture class in Little Thunderbird and Rising Thunderbird academies and there are two Navajo Language and Culture classes at the Thunderbird Academy. Navajo Language and Culture is a requirement for our students attending TCBS.

Reasons for Relationality & Kinship

The reason I chose to write a curriculum unit on relationality and kinship is to enrich the young minds of my fourth-grade students. I have been teaching for twenty-seven years, when I first started teaching about 99% of the students could speak the Navajo language. They knew about k'é in their home and their relatives. I have seen the knowledge of kinship and relations have decreased over the years. Today I have zero students in my classes that speak the Navajo language. Some of the students understand the language but they cannot carry a conversation in Navajo let alone say a sentence on their own in Navajo. I have asked how they address their family members, they answered with their first name, mom/dad, nalii, cheii or their nicknames. They are not practicing their kinship in their family. This unit will be step-by-step on how to use proper kinship terms in their home with their family.

The mission statement of Tuba City Boarding School which is, "At Tuba City Boarding School children are first, important, unique, responsible, and nurtured. Opportunities are provided for positive, life-long learning, healthy growth, success, and self-worth. A quality education is supported in a safe and ***culturally competent environment***. Parents, community and school, together, educating the whole child for life" (TCBS). I call them, "Sha'álchíní" (my children). I learned a lot about my student in third grade, about their home setting and whose responsibility they are, single parenting homes, grandparents as their guardians, some doesn't have their parents with them anymore or some are away working, serving time, or were given up on. Some of them come from non-Navajo speaking parents or non-Navajo families. Therefore, I consider them my children. I will take the responsibility to equally educate them about the curriculum unit K'é – As it Makes Me on rationality and kinship and explore beyond that so they will be a respected member in their family and citizen in their community. They will all have the opportunities for a quality education in a safe and culturally responsive environment for them to be positive, life-long learning, healthy growth, success, and self-worth individuals.

The Navajo Nation is a sovereign nation; they have their own government. Many of us ask ourselves, what does sovereignty mean? Sovereignty is the ability to govern yourself (Austin,

2017) to be self-reliant, and self-sufficient (Nez, 2021). Shicheii used to say to us, 'T'áá hó ájít'éego t'éiyá hazhó'ó ne'iina' anilééh dooleeł.' What does T'áá hó ájít'éego mean? You have the ability to do for yourself (Begay, 2017). This means we all have the ability to make changes for ourselves, for our family, for our communities, and for our nation (King, 2018). Sovereignty in education, we have the ability to educate our children and people (Szasz, 1999) at home and at school. At a young age I was always told this quote by my grandparents and parents and today I tell my kids and grandkids. I also stress this to my students in my classroom. We can tell our students, T'áá hó ájít'éego, we also need to tell what it means and how they can perform it. In Diné education or ways of learning, there is wisdom and western education. Wisdom is what we learn at home (Benally, 1994; Lee, 2020) from our family and grandparents. Western education is K through 12 education and college. You have your wisdom from home and learning from school, you put it together, it is very powerful (Nez, 2021). I would like my students to blend wisdom, culture, traditions, their native (Diné) language with what they are learning in the western education to be successful and a lifelong learner. Then they will know what resilience; overcoming, is all about. Once they are told they cannot do what they need to do they will quit then depression follows and lastly they drop out of school. Our elders, although they did not learn in the western education, they know about resilience and overcoming because they have wisdom. Shicheii Gibson, he was a medicine person and finished high school, he knew more about tradition than someone with a PhD. He used to say, the more degrees you get, the dumber you are. Now I understand what he meant by that, he wanted me to learn the wisdom first then bring that into my classroom to teach so my students will be a successful learner.

Content Objectives

Class Schedule

The school year 24/25, the school has mandated the mainstream classroom to have 190 minutes of reading and math to have the students improve their reading and math skills. In Rising Thunderbird Academy, we have been doing some interventions with our students such as RTI. The special class teachers, Navajo Language and Culture is one the special classes, are required to assist with the interventions. The Special class schedule and time has changed quite a bit. The class time in my class has reduced by ten minutes from the previous year. This year my total class time with each class is 45 minutes. My teaching days are four days a week, which makes three hours of teaching per week. It takes me about two days to get through a lesson. I was given the task of making a special schedule for my department. I will have all three grade levels for three weeks at a time for the first quarter and then I will have each grade level for a whole quarter each. I am writing this curriculum as if I have my students for 55 minutes four days a week.



Law and Language Study

The Native American Languages Act, 25 U.S.C. §§2901-2906 (1990) declares that it is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages (Native American Languages Act. 1990.) This federal policy basically states that Native American languages can be restored and/or stabilized through educating the youth in their native languages in an educational institution. This Act allows me to teach Navajo language to students at the Tuba City Boarding School community. I have taught Navajo language for a total of twenty-five years at two school districts in the western agency of the Navajo Nation. I have seen a dramatic decrease of our proficient Navajo speakers within the last seven years. The first year of teaching the Navajo language in 2004, 50% of my students were proficient in Navajo, about 10% were fluent speakers and 99% understood the language when spoken. Today none of my students are fluent or proficient in speaking the Navajo language. All my students are second Navajo language learners. I would say about 70% of the Navajo students understand the language when spoken to them but none will respond in a complete sentence in Navajo. There could be a number of reasons that led to Navajo language attrition in the past twenty years. Research was conducted at Rocky Ridge Boarding School on study of reasons for Navajo language attrition as perceived by Navajo speaking parents of students who are non-speakers of the Navajo language. In the study's findings to the reasons why Navajo parents believed Navajo language attrition, which are 1) English-speaking friend; 2) times spent away from home; 3) the child is ashamed of the language; 4) the language was kept away from the child for him/her to do well in school; 5) the parents did not speak to the child in Navajo; or 6) Navajo language speaking was discouraged at school. (Yazzie. A. P. 1995). Navajo language has been taught in schools and reason six would not be the cause of Navajo language attrition today. I believe that because of these reasons parents today speak only the English language to their children at home.

Importance of K'é and K'ei

What is the difference between k'é (kinship) and or k'ei (relation by clan)? Kinship is the relationship between members of the immediate family. Of course there are ethnic groups who have different systems of kinship. But the Navajo kinship is abstract and specific. Kinship starts within the family, it is like a law that we have to know how to address our family members, that if we are to call a person older than us by their name, it is considered disrespectful. The Diné society is based primarily on k'é and kinship. It is important to know your clans and proper kinship terms according to how you are related to someone. It plays an important role in the family and extended family. I remember Shichó, my maternal grandmother, scolded me once for calling my oldest aunt by her English name. She says I was disrespectful of the family and our elders. I learned my lesson that day. We are to use only the proper kinship term to address family members. In a family, we are all related by kinship, I was taught about using the proper kinship terms within the family at an early age. This taught me character building, being respectful and kind. Diné family address each other using proper kinship, we respect one another with kinship. Diné children are expected to learn their duties and responsibilities through k'é. I have two sons and two daughters, and I always talk to them about k'é and I do expect them to know their duties and responsibilities. My youngest son's voice changed, we noticed but waited to see if he noticed anything new about himself. Shimá, I think I am getting sick. Why do you think that? Well, my voice is somehow. Binaaí (his older brother) says, "shitsilí, you are now a man! We need to contact the elders for a sweat at the sweat lodge". When boys' voices change, they have reached puberty. They are now considered a man. When Shicheii and my clan brothers went sweating with my son, they talked to him about the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of a young man, as a warrior; among other things of being a man. Since my son's father is absent in our family, I sat him down to talk to him as well:

Shiyáázh (my son), you are now a young man. This means you have duties and obligations that you will need to fulfill as a young man of our clan Naasht'ézhí Tábaqahá. Yours sister's children; nieces and nephews are your responsibility. You need to seek traditional knowledge and teachings and learn to sing some protection songs, pray, and learn to plan, ninahat'a' hólóqo ya'át'ééh. You will protect your sisters' kids, by talking to them, be there when they need you, proper teasing and for your nephews, your brother's and sisters' sons, you are to teach them to take care of the livestock, just as your older brother taught you. You are now a guidance counselor. You will take care of our home, livestock, and the ceremonial ground/hogan at home. Be prepared if any of your family members wants to have a ceremony, make sure the chizh (firewood) shed is filled, the ceremonial grounds are ready for use, the hogan and the sweat lodge has a stack of chizh ready for use. I have talked to you about all this since a young boy, and you are already doing your duties. When you get a woman, a wife, you will treat her with the respect as you did with me and your nieces.

The one thing I do not want her to do is raise you again, you learn all you need to know about life and making a living with a wife and be ready to be a father. Marriage is not perfect all the time, there will be disagreements, you will learn to have patience and understanding of a woman. You have seen your sister's mood swings when she is pregnant. In Diné traditions the husband moves to the wife's family homestead and builds a home. I will leave it all up to you two to decide. All of how you will deal with these challenges you will learn. Be observant and if you have any questions, I will be here. But your duties, responsibilities, and obligations as an uncle are to continue, lifetime.

I had the same talk with my older son. He now has his family and supports them. And I have two beautiful daughters, one I have three beautiful granddaughters. When my youngest daughter turned puberty, we celebrated with kinaalda. My mother once told me, "When your daughter reaches her puberty, you will perform the kinaalda twice and each time within the fourth day. If you are lazy and do not appreciate them, you will not do that for them". A celebration of woman puberty set forth for Diné women by the female deity Yoolgai Asdzáá (Whiteshell Woman) who became Asdzáá Nádleehí (Changing Woman) after growing into a young woman in twelve days. My sister's, aunts and grandmothers of Naasht'ézhí Tábaqahá all came to be a part of the celebration which takes two to three days. They all talk to her about her roles, duties, and responsibilities as a young woman and when she becomes a wife. I have been teaching my daughters about making all kinds of corn meals, weaving a rug, and to be independent. When my youngest daughter had her kinaalda, I told her she will now be responsible for all the other kinaalda for her nieces and daughters. I told her about the making of yilkaqad (corn cake); the recipes, and the directions of how to start, what to do during the mixing, and to the end when cutting the cake from the ground. I told her I will be there to facilitate when it is her turn to make a yilkaqad. K'4 and ak'47 teaches character building and self-worth. It is important for our students to know this so they will utilize this to continue to be a lifelong learner. Shicheii said to us, you will never learn or know everything. By the time you reach old age, you live your life to the fullest but did not learn everything, you only have a size of one sand of knowledge. I always remember that.

K'ei

Lee say K'é and k'ei frame view of the universe as a web of relations which coexist with hózhó. Celebrations of puberty for young men and women bring a lot of relatives together. Shichó and Shicheii knew and helped many of their relatives, far and wide. When they have some kind of ceremony or gathering, a lot of relatives come. Shichó tells me who the relatives are, where they are from and most of them are within her immediate and extended family. When asked "Háish Nikia?" (Who are your relatives?) one would think of all those who he/she is related to by clans or immediate family. The response you would want to say, "I have a lot of relatives, which one?" but that would be disrespectful. People, older than me or elders, that I meet, I tell them my four clans and who my maternal grandparents were. For example, I tell them my four clans then say,

“Shicheii éi Sid Collins or Atsidiilchíi’ Biye’ wolyé nít’éé’”. They automatically, if they had known Shicheii, say, “I remember him. His wife is my sister which makes you my granddaughter.” It is amazing how well the Diné elders know one another. I have seen my maternal grandparents model this at a young age. I asked Shichó about my clans, she told me my clans in the order I have to introduce myself, and to never forget who I am and where I come from. I have four clans: my mother’s clan, father’s clan, my maternal grandfather’s clan and my paternal grandfather’s clans. “Your clans will take you all over and get to meet a lot of people. You also have family out there with your clans,” Shichó told me. I find this same concept in the reading of Diné Identity, “when people share one or more of their four clans, the group composes a shik’éei (my relatives), a family connection is established, and people address each other in the proper way. Each Diné person will have numerous relatives (Lee, 2020).

Navajo Clanship

The Diné clan system is complex. Diné clans are in a group of related clans. They are made up of the four original clans (Kinyaa’áanii, Honágháahnii, Tódich’ii’nii, and Hashtl’ishnii) were created by female deity Asdzáá Nádleehí - Changing Woman in the west (Mose, 2018) The four original clans have their own group of clans to whom they are related. There are other clans that came to be after the four original clans. Some other clans are adopted and some originated long ago when the Navajo warriors would raid neighboring tribes or Mexicans and bring back women and children. They later became a part of the Navajo clan system. Again, there are ethnic groups who have different clan systems. The clan chart Diné College has online has nine Navajo clan groups, fourteen groups are of the other tribes that one way or another became a part of the clan group, and a list of other races which lists other Indigenous groups (Diné College, n.d.). We are taught not to marry within the same clan groups as our mother’s clan and father’s clan groups. K’é and Ádóone’é is hózhó; respect and harmony. There is harmony within the family if there is k’é and ádóone’é is present in the family. Shichó said when I get older, get married and have kids. But I have to be knowledgeable about which clans I can marry into and which one I cannot. To protect the clan blood, we are not to marry into the first two clans. The last two clans we can marry into.

Diné Names

Long before the white man came to give the Navajos their English names, The Diné people had their Diné names which they obtained at birth or at a young age and may change as they grow older. As you get older, names have to be earned. There are two types of Navajo names, one was given to them by a family member, usually an uncle or maternal/paternal grandmother and the other is a spiritual name, which is given in a ceremonial setting or if the boy voice changes they are given a spiritual name at the sweat lodge by their maternal grandfather or maternal uncles; girls are also given spiritual names at the time of their second kinaalda, young Diné girls when they reach their puberty the family celebrates her womanhood, we do not disclose our spiritual name to anyone. Navajo leaders from the past are good examples of having a Diné name.

Manuelito was well known for his leadership skills, accomplishments, and fearless war leaders of the Diné warriors. When he was born, he was given a name Ashkii Diyini meaning holy boy. As he grew older, his Diné name changed until he became Hashké Naaabaahii meaning Angry Warrior and Hashké Naat’áanii when he became the war chief of the Diné people (Denetdale, 2007).

Connectedness to Earth/Universe

Shicheii, how do you say a prayer? You mean how do you talk to your creators and one that guides you through your life’s journey, he says. Then he says to repeat after him with a short prayer.

Nahasdzáán Shimá; Yádiłhxił Shitaa’	Mother Earth; Father Universe
Dził Yisdzáán; Tó Yisdzáán	Mother Mountain; Water Woman
Chahałhxeel; Hayookkáál	Darkness Twilight; Early Dawn
Haashch’éełti’í; Haashchééwaan	First Talking God; Second Talking God
Naadá’algai; Naadá’áltsoí	White Corn; Yellow Corn
Tádídíín; Anilt’ánii	Corn Pollen; Corn Beetle
Si’ah Naaghái; Bik’eh Hózhóón	
Hózhó Náhasdlíí’; Hózhó Náhasdlíí’	
Hózhó Náhasdlíí’; Hózhó Náhasdlíí’	

Shicheii Gibson explains the meaning of the prayer: We are Nihokáá’ Diyin Dine’é (holy people of the earth), she provides us with a home and nurtures us with a variety of vegetation and the food we eat. We are born on earth and travel our life’s journey on earth, when we leave the world of living, we go back to earth. Our existence is between Nahasdzáán and Yádiłhxił, we stand and walk on earth and our head is toward the universe. Dził Yisdzáán (mountains) we address them as our mother. The six sacred mountains are our home, we live within them. Tó Yisdzáán (water) is essential to our daily living. She gives birth, nurtures and cleanses us. Every living thing needs water. Chahałhxeel (Folding Darkness) is when we rest our mind and body. Our body is given to us only once in our lifetime, therefore we need to care for our body by getting enough rest. Hayookkáál (Early Dawn) when we go out to greet the early dawn to give thanks for the new day and pray for good health and blessings. Haashch’éełti’í (First Talking God) stands in the east, Shicheii says when you see the early dawn it is the twelve feathers of the First Talking God. We pray to him with white corn. Haashchééwaan (Second Talking God) stands in the west; the yellow evening twilight are his feathers as well. We pray to him with yellow corn. Naadá’algai (white corn) and Naadá’áltsoí (yellow corn) are the sacred foods of Diné. Diné uses corn in many ways, and we do not let it go to waste. It is our traditional food, there are a variety of ways to make corn meal. They are used in traditional ceremonies. The corn husk is used to roll tobacco and pray with it. Shichó told me, if you leave a kernel behind, it will cry after you. You do not waste corn, therefore; you do not waste any food. Tádídíín (Corn Pollen) is used to pray. We are not to use corn pollen outside of our sacred mountains. It

represents hózhó (harmony). Aníł'ánii (corn beetle) a sacred insect that lives among the corn. It appeared with the first children in a big corn field. Si'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón (Journey of Life) is the philosophy of the people. What was addressed above will have a healthy and blessed life journey. In this way we talk to the Holy Ones with beauty all around me. It is beautiful!

Teaching Strategies

Technology Integration: Schoology is the school's learning management system. I post all assignments and assessments on Schoology. Schoology has the BIE and Diné Content Standards, I can now include the standard on my assessments as well as other assignments.

Scaffolding is education: A system or framework of support provided by an instructor to help a student reach the next level of learning. By identifying the next skills just above the child's current skill level, then providing *scaffolding* (or assistance) in a way that helps the child display the identified skills accurately, and then fading out the need for *scaffolding*, you can help a child to learn new things and become more independent," says Heather Gilmore (Merriam-Webster.). I will do a lot of scaffolding for each of the parts of the unit.

Did you Know?: Every day we learn something new. This is a great activity I can do with my students to cover some parts of the unit I will not be able to get to because of time, my class time is only 45 minutes long. I will post a question about the law and language studies section of my unit, and I will enlighten them on the Native American Language Act of 1990 and language studies. I can do that with other parts of the unit too. I will also do this with other units.

Note Taking: This is an important skill the students need to master. I tell them, note taking is what you will be doing all through your educational career. I have my students for three years, from third grade to fifth grade. They get a notebook in third grade, they use the same notebook through fifth grade, that is their portfolio. They take notes of all we cover and what they learn, at the end of each school year, they go back and evaluate themselves using their portfolios.

Project-Based Learning: Each of the grade levels have a project to work on. For fourth grade, they will be creating kinship and clan projects for this unit. They will do a family chart with proper kinship terms. For the clan project, they will illustrate the meaning of their four clans.

Formative Assessment Strategies: I will post Exit Tickets in Schoology after each full lesson checking for their understanding. I will have a Quick Write at the end of class to write what they learned in the day's lesson. These Quick Writes can also be questions about the lesson of

questions about something they like to know. I tell my students to seek traditional knowledge by asking me questions.

Group Discussions and Questioning Techniques: Students will discuss within their group on a given topic about this unit. They will note what they discussed and write any questions they may have about the topic.

Face-Off: This is a great learning activity to teach vocabulary words. It is a vocabulary game. I will have my students stand back-to-back with their partner with a whiteboard (or an index card) in hand. I will give them one of the learning vocabulary words, prompt them to write the definition on their whiteboard. I call out “Face-off!” and they turn face-to-face and share the definition they write on their whiteboard. They find a new partner and the game starts again with another word.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: My classroom is a culturally responsive classroom. When you walk into my classroom you will see all vocabulary words in Diné language, posters of clans, and all students greet their visitors with “Ya’át’ée’h”.

Narrative Writing: Students will be writing narrative reports of their family stories and clans. They will use the six traits of writing.

I Do, We Do, You Do: I DO - Teacher talks 90% of the time presenting the lesson and modeling the assignment to be done by the students. WE DO - teacher and students talk 50%/50% of the time, guided practice. YOU DO - 100% student independent work, without assistance from the teacher. Teacher is the facilitator.

Classroom Activities

In third grade, I introduced the basic kinship terms within the immediate family (self, parents, siblings, and both maternal and paternal grandparents). With this unit, the students will explore kinship outside their immediate family. They will explore furthermore into extended family, Diné names, if they have one, their clan origin stories, how they relate themselves with their community and their homeland. Students will be speaking the kinship terms by speaking, thinking, writing, and presenting in the Navajo language. The fourth-grade class learns a different range of learning abilities, from students with learning disabilities, they are academically challenged all the way to high achievers. They have different learning styles, kinesthetic, auditory, visual learners, and reading and writing. Some of them are at a slow pace and some will get work done quicker. No matter their abilities in their academic learning and style of learning, they are all special to me.

This is the outline of my curriculum unit K'é - As It Makes Me. I divided the curriculum unit into five parts. Using the Diné Content Standards and the World and Native Language Standards students will know and be able to study and learn to communicate in the Navajo language. By engaging the students in learning rationality, the quality or state of being agreeable to reason (Merriam-Webster.) and kinship, the importance of proper kinship terms and knowing their clans and k'ée. Students will learn the difference between K'é and K'ée. K'é is the family structure in a daily presence for each Diné. Kinship plays an important role in the family and extended family. K'ée are the clan relatives (Lee, 2020). Students will learn how names are important in their daily lives. Students will learn they are part of the earth and the universe, why the Diné people say “Shimá Nahasdzáán dóó Yádihxil Shitaa” - Mother Earth and Father Sky. They will reconnect to the place where they call “home.” Students will learn the unit in “three methods of communications: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading), and presentational (one-way speaking and writing)” (Arizona Department of Education, p 3).

Part I: Laws & School Mission Statement

Prior to introducing the law and mission statement I want to see students' prior knowledge of any law, rule, authority or policy, I will be asking my students to write anonymously how they are familiar with any of these. I will then collect their answers and compile them to see how familiar we are with law, rule, authority or policies. There will be a group discussion about our data. How do we uphold these laws, rules, authority, and policies? Group or class discussion will take place on how we uphold these laws, rules, authority, or policies. I will ask, “Did you know there is a law about your native language? The Native American Languages Act, 25 U.S.C. §§2901-2906 (1990) declares that it is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages” (Native American Languages Act. 1990). I will also share with them the mission statement of Tuba City Boarding School which is, “At Tuba City Boarding School children are first, important, unique, responsible, and nurtured. Opportunities are provided for positive, life-long learning, healthy growth, success, and self-worth. A quality education is supported in a safe and culturally competent environment. Parents, community and school, together, educating the whole child for life” (TCBS). We will use the echo reading strategy to read the statement and identify the main point of the statement then highlight the important parts of the mission statement. I will pose questions like, “What can you do to be a life-long learner? How can the educational system nurture you as you learn?” We will discuss this as a group. I will model how to pose questions of the statement. I will let them know to use who, what, how, why, and where questioning. For example, “Who is this mission statement written for?” Then the students will pose questions and discuss the answer among their group.

Navajo Language Studies

Students will learn about the history of the Navajo language, how it is used as a protection first and it has its own song and prayer, this makes the Navajo language unique and sacred. Then I will introduce the word “attrition.” “What do you think it means? The act of weakening or exhausting by constant harassment, abuse, or attack” (Merriam-Webster.) “What are some examples of harassment, abuse or attack?” Students will brainstorm some examples or synonyms of harassment, abuse, or attack. Compile the findings and post it. I will then tell them about the Navajo language attrition through the years and about the study that was conducted at Rocky Ridge Boarding School in 1995 and the finding of the research and compare that to our brainstorm of the word “attrition” (Yazzie. A. P. 1995). “How or what can you do to restore or stabilize your native language?” Students will identify ways how they restore, for those whose family do not use their native language, or stabilize, for those whose family members still use their native language. In this section I use the term “Native language” because I have a diversity of students from the neighboring tribes of the Navajo Nation in my school. They will start realizing they are at risk of losing their native language. I will share my teaching experience with them:

I have been teaching for 27 years. When I started teaching at the local preschool, 99% of my students spoke the Diné language and I could carry on a conversation in Diné language with them. As the years went by, I have noticed student Diné language speakers have dramatically decreased over the years. Since 2019, I have had one student who was proficient in the language. Today I do not have a student in my class that I could have a conversation with in Diné language. I always wondered why there was a dramatic change in students speaking Diné language.

Now I would like for you to think about how or why you did not learn your native language at home. I would like for you to write down in your portfolio notebook what your thoughts are for not learning your native language. Then I will have students work in groups, using what they write in their notebook they will list ways they can restore or stabilize their native language at home. This question could also be assigned as homework and students and their family will work on this together. After the list returns, I will make a checklist of the most common and students will check all that applies to them and set a goal for themselves.

Part II: K'é - Immediate Family

In this part of the unit, we will review kinship in the immediate family that was covered the previous school year. Students will create a family tree, illustrate a diagram of family members' names and proper kinship within the immediate family (shí, shimá, shizhe'é, bił háíjéé', shinaaí, shitsilí, shádí, shideezhí, shicheii, shichó/shimásání, shináí hastiin/asdzáá). I will tell of self-identity with k'é; shí is my head, shádí dóó shideezhí will be the right arm; shinaaí dóó shitsilí would be left arm; neck on down to waist is parents because I am of their blood, they made me;

right leg is my maternal grandparents and left leg is my paternal grandparents because they are my strength and courage; my tracks are my ancestors, I walk the land they walked which makes my resilience. They will recognize they are a product of their great great grandparents' resilience of historical traumas and challenges they had to endure for them to be there today. I will have a model of the family tree for them to look at.

Teaching the vocabulary words of kinship in Diné language. I will display the vocabulary words on the board. We will define each of the kinship terms. Students will write the vocabulary words in their notebook. I have created an activity of matching k'é vocabulary words with sentences. For example, Shichó (maternal grandmother) will match with the sentence, Shichó éí shimá bimá (My maternal grandmother is my mother's mother.) Students will use the activity to learn vocabulary words. I will also play Face-Off with the students using the vocabulary words. I will tell them the rules of the game. "Get with a partner, stand back-to-back, you each have your whiteboard and your marker. I will give you one of our vocabulary words, you will write the meaning of the word on your board. When I say 'Face-Off,' you will both turn around and face each other, then share the meaning of the word you wrote down on your board. For example, I will say 'Shinálí Asdzáá,' you write the meaning of the word, paternal grandmother. Face-Off then I share with my partner what I wrote."

Part III: Adóone'é/K'éí- Clans Groups, Characteristics, How are we related?

I will present to my students the stories of the how the four original clans (Kinyaa'áanii, Honágháahnii, Tódich'íi'nii, and Hashtł'ishnii) were created by female deity Asdzáá Nádleehí - Changing Woman in the west. (Mose, D.) The characteristics and talent these clans have will be presented to the students. Then they will have their clans on hand to research the origins of their clans by interviewing their parents and/or their maternal/paternal grandparents. I will share my clan story:

Naasht'ézhí Tábaqhá, this particular clan originated from a place called White Corn Mesa in the Zuni reservation. Two young children, boy and girl, were found in a corn field by a man passing by on his horse. His wife was unable to bear children. He brought the children home and told his wife how and where he found the children. His wife tells him, you are of the Tábaqhá clan and since you have found the children in the Zuni country near White Corn Mesa, therefore their clan will be Naadq'algai Diné Naasht'ézhí Tábaqhá. The term Naadq'algai Diné is The People of White Corn, because he found the kids in the corn field near a corn stalk.

You will write a short narrative of any of your four clans. You and your family can work on this writing together. They are your resource for this project. You cannot Google your clan and find it there. The students will write a narrative on the origin of their clan, for those students who are unable to get anything of their clan origins they will illustrate their four clans.

K'éei

Háish nik'éei? Who is related to you by clan? Háish shik'éei? Who is related to me by clan? We will answer the question by looking at the different clan groups of the Navajo using the Guide to Navajo clans (Diné College, n.d.) and the clans of the Hopi. I do have Hopi students and Navajo/Hopi students, whose mother is a Navajo and born for Hopi, and Hopi/Navajo students, whose mother is Hopi and born for Navajo. Each year when 3rd graders come in, I collect their clans. Then I created a list of students and their clans. The students also have their clans written in their notebook. I will explain how you will find out how you are related by clans. For example:

Name	Nishłı́ (mother's clan)	Báshishchíín (father's clan)	Dashicheii (mat. grandfather's clan)	Dashinálı́ (pat. grandfather's clan)
Jane Doe	Tódich'íi'nii	Naakai Dine'é	Honágháahnii	Tábaąhá
Wally Salt	Naakai Dine'é	Tótsohnii	Tódich'íi'nii	Tł'ízı́ Łání

Using your first clan, mother's clan to find out how you are related. Here Jane's first clan is Tódich'íi'nii and that is Wally's maternal grandfather's clan. Which means that Jane is Wally's maternal grandmother since Jane is a girl. Jane will say to Wally "Shitsoi" (my grandson) and Wally will say "Shimásání" or "Shichó" (my maternal grandmother). Next, Wally's first clan is Naakai Dine'é and that is Jane's father's clan. Which means Wally is Jane's father. Then Wally is Jane's father. Wally will say to Jane "shitsi" (my daughter) and Jane will say to Wally "shiiizhe'é" (my father). I used to create a chart of the class clan chart and color code by clan group for the students. Unfortunately, I cannot do that anymore because some students' clans are the same color in all four areas, then they go to their parents and tell them about it. The parents contacted the school about it, and it became a sensitive chart to share with students. I created a form for all students for individual use to find how they are related to each other. They will be using the form to identify which of their classmates are their k'éei, related to each other by clans. Using their clans, they will ask and find out which of their classmates is related to them. They then will use proper kinship terms to address each other.

Part IV: Yizhı́ - Name (Navajo Name)

Then we will continue learning about the importance of their Navajo names, if they were given one. I will present to them the story of Navajo names. I will use the former Navajo leaders like Manuelito, Barboncito, Annie Wauneka and Chee Dodge. Long before the white man came to give the Navajos their English names, they had their Navajo names which they obtained at birth or at a young age and may change as they grow older. Some names are given using their first or second clans. For example, when my older grandson was born I gave him the name Táchii'nii Nééz - Tall Red Running Into the Water which is the first clan is Táchii'nii and he is tall; and I

named my younger grandson Táchii'niitsoh - Tall Red Running Into the Water which is the first clan is Táchii'nii and he is big. Names can be given based on the things a person does or one's characteristics and who their parents are. For example, my maternal grandfather's Diné name was Atsidiilchíí' Biye' - Son of Red Faced a Silversmith. Our Diné name connects us to the land and belonging to a clan group or family. Today not many Navajo have their Navajo names, instead they have nicknames given in their childhood.

Part V: Nahasdzáán/Yádihxiił Earth/Universe K'éyah - Where Do You Call Home

Students continue learning they are part of the earth and the universe, why the Diné people say “Shimá Nahasdzáán dóó Yádihxiił Shitaa” - Mother Earth and Father Sky. We are related to walks of life, the plants, animals, water, fire and air. This brings to the final part of the unit, our homeland. They will learn how they are a part of their homeland. Teacher will present the students with the Navajo Nation Map with town and place names in Navajo. Students will identify where they live and what the place name is in Navajo. They will also identify the names of their surrounding towns or places. At the end of the unit, all students will have a poster board of their “K'é - As It Makes Me” to present by having a school gallery walk down the hall for the whole school to see. Of course, each of my students will be graded using a rubric.

Assessment Plan & Standards Alignments

Since my Navajo language class is considered a special class, the Navajo language teachers at the school use the Diné Content Standards and the World Language Standards of Arizona.

Standard	Learning Objective	Assessment	Assessment Format
4.IR.NH.1	I will be able to identify kinship vocabularies in Navajo.	Formative	Reading vocabulary words aloud
4.IR.NH.1	I will be able to read and understand the sentences about kinship in Navajo.	Formative Summative	Group activity Schoolology Assess. (teacher made)
4.DCA.C2.PO2 4.PS.NM.1	I will be able to introduce my immediate family with proper kinship terms and present to my classmates.	Summative	Rubric
4.DHS.C1.PO1 4.PW.IL.1	I will write a short narrative report of one of my four clan stories.	Summative Culminating Activity	Rubric
4.DHS.C1.PO1	I will illustrate the meaning of	Summative	Rubric

4.PS.NM.1	my four clans and present it to my classmates.	Culminating Activity	
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Resources

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Appendix

A.

K'é	Ak'éí
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	What else do we relate to?
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B.

Saad Bóhoo'aahí

Shí - Me

Bił Haijée' - My siblings

Shideezhí - My younger sister

Shádí - My older sister

Shinaaí - My older brother

Shitsilí - My younger brother

Shimá - My mother

Shizhe'é - My father

Shicheii- My maternal grandfather

Shichó/Shimásání- My maternal grandmother

Shinálí Hastiin - My paternal grandfather

Shinálí Asdzq - My paternal grandmother

C. What does our hand represent? Our hand is our family.

